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Critique - Executive Seminar

I. Method and Content of the one-week Seminar

1. As a partisan of the Management School which believes that almost any organizational structure or philosophy will work and vice versa, depending on the will of its members to make it work; in this light, I accept the Grid as a frame of reference. Acceptance of the Grid is not universal but could be made more nearly so by a clearer statement that this is chosen as a convenient frame of reference because it incorporates as many features as any Management training framework now in use. I personally believe that the Grid's added sensory dimension, being "chartable", is important.

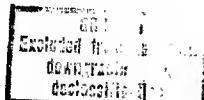
"Team effectiveness" is a dramatic quality of this training. It was quite an experience to see a group of individuals strive and succeed in a relatively short time in becoming an effective team. Yet, the Green group obviously strove to become a group--which is more than half the battle in "team effectiveness". Even so there were small signs of reluctance to contribute fully to the team, ergo, the need for confrontation. The area of confrontation is critical to good management; and while it is inevitable, residual hostility must be avoided. Perhaps as close as one will ever come to accomplishing this goal will be by developing an "art" of de-personalized confrontation, using a clinical-like approach to issue and facts but combining this with a warm, human approach to personalities.

2. The training method is outstanding. There is no better way of learning, for my money, than by doing and this is precisely the core of the method. Our time was used to the fullest; even though the experiment was costly there, it was no waste of time.

3. The only change I would suggest would be to have the pre-course reading done at [REDACTED] in a two-day period. One of the weaknesses that I observed and which could not be remedied (as the instructors clearly pointed out) was the failure to have prepared properly. Those who were not ready impaired the effectiveness of others.

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4. I certainly believe that the discussion of the Agency management problems is appropriate (otherwise, what's the point); in fact, I would expect that the gradual evolution of this training will focus almost entirely on Agency problems. I would hope, for the good of the Agency, that this course develop a "strong memory" in order that the wisdom of competitive groups of its principal officers be reduced to practical use. I suggest that the application of this training to the Agency be discussed in the first hours and that the program gradually be reoriented to concern itself with the indicated "softest" areas of Agency management.

5. The cloistered, inbred nature of our Organization is one of our greatest dangers. As the years pass and we maintain only the slimmest "living" relationship with the world of Government, business and general society, the need for outspoken contact with the outside becomes critical. The use of outside consultants adds verve, spice and new blood; and importantly is the possibility that one day with sufficient experience with our personnel and Agency, these outsiders will be able to contribute significantly by noting our blind spots, arising from the occupational hazards and peculiarities of our unique existence and activity. I see our problem to be one concerned with the maintenance of a competitive and open atmosphere which provides the finest climate for intellectual development and general creativity within a framework of meticulously planned but scarcely felt management.

6. I cannot think of a better approach unless it be the creation of permanent committees to concern themselves with the major aspects of management and report on a regular basis to the Executive Director.

II. Personal Benefit

7. I cannot truthfully say that completely new concepts were introduced, but certainly some were developed further than I had personally developed them. It will be possible for me to teach and pass on to people working with me some of the ideas gained. I would say that the greatest personal benefit came from a better appreciation of the basic "healthiness" of conflict. The devilish part of conflict as I pointed out in Section I is how to engage in it without poisoning the atmosphere.

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8. Confrontation is easily translatable to the Operations School, being the essence of case officer-agent relationship. I have already begun using a "team" based on some of the lessons learned during the seminar in my work in the development of case studies to be used in the Operations School and [redacted]. I hope to incorporate some of the team concepts into our training programs.

9. It would be hard to say how the seminar could have been of more benefit, but I think additional rotation into the other groups would have been revealing. The expansion of the exercise on Agency "problems" is indicated. This aspect of the course should get into: (a) how a Division desk and studies are managed; (b) how the careers of officers in the various components are planned; and most importantly, (c) the legal or executive fixed responsibilities of the Agency and its actual activities.

III. Appropriateness of this Seminar for Others

10. In my opinion, this seminar would be of substantial benefit to every individual having supervisory responsibilities over the grade GS-12. I do not believe it is suitable below that grade. I think this principally because on a level below GS-13, given the age bracket and perhaps the general experience, the development of the confrontation principal might produce a debating society.

11. No. Not at this time.

12. I certainly think it should be repeated next May and I think the participants should be selected by the Executive Director in conjunction with each Deputy Director.

IV. Organizational Development

13. It is my opinion that a representative element of the Agency should take the entire program and this bloc serve as a criteria for judging the adequacy and pertinency of this training for the Agency.

14. I consider this seminar to be a step in an evolutionary development of a management training program concerned with the specific needs of the Agency. I think it is right for the times, but the mismanagement which resulted in the 701 up-heaval and in personnel

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problems today might have been different if the Agency would have been more aware and concerned with management ten years ago. The Agency is, in my opinion, too big and engaged in too many activities of marginal value and ill-defined jurisdiction which have a serious damage potential. A tighter management of men, money and time will reduce the hazards; and it is how we can develop the Agency into a "free society" within an iron-jacket of effective managerial organization that remains the critical long-range problem.

V. Additional Comment

15. A most interesting and significant contribution to the evolution of our managerial training effectively and efficiently run by Mease:

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Chief, Operations School/TR

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